



GETTING TO COLLEGE STARTS NOW

Make the Dream Real.

You want the best for your children. That usually includes dreams of a college education. Certainly, a college education expands an individual's knowledge and skills, but it also brings greater job opportunities and the chance to earn more over a lifetime than someone who only has a high school diploma. Increasingly, employers are looking to hire individuals with a college degree. Making the right choices now and through high school will open up possibilities that are not available without a college education.

Explore these sites to learn more.

- www.nycolleges.org A comprehensive Web site about New York's 100+ private colleges and universities, admission and financial aid.
- www.nycareerzone.org A site for career exploration.
- www.hesc.org Information about paying for college and state and federal grants and scholarships.
- www.studentaid.ed.gov Federal Student Aid Information Center.
- www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov Provides early estimates of federal student aid eligibility.
- www.finaid.org Financial aid information.
- www.nysaves.org Information about New York's 529 college savings program.

Paying for College.

It's never too early to start thinking about saving for college. Planning and saving – the earlier the better – will help ensure your child has a leg up in the college planning process.

Never count out college because you think the cost of college is too high or won't fit in your budget. The actual cost to students is less since there are many ways that the state and federal governments, and colleges and universities, provide support with grants, scholarships, and loans to help students and families pay. In fact, more than 8 out of 10 students receive financial aid to help pay for college.

Helpful tips to plan ahead.

- Saving early – even a little – will decrease the amount of loans needed for college.
- Become familiar with federal and state tax credits and deductions for allowable college expenses.
- Look for scholarships early. Search online and in your community to discover what is available and what is required to apply.

Haven't started saving yet?

Don't worry; it's never too late! Encourage the habit of putting money aside for college. There are several programs that allow family members or others to save for a student's college education. The more you are able to save, the more options students will have to consider for college and the less they'll need to borrow.

With careful advance planning and by putting away small amounts as early as you can, a little bit adds up quickly:

- Putting away \$15 every week into a savings account with a 3% interest rate will grow to \$6,077.19 in seven years.
- Putting away \$30 every week into a savings account with a 3% interest rate will grow to \$12,154.38 in seven years.

Source: www.finaid.org

Additional programs to help plan financially for college.

New York's 529 College Savings Program (NYSAVES). This program provides a flexible, convenient, and low-cost way to save for college with as little as \$25 per month. For information: www.nysaves.org; or call toll-free 877.NYSAVES.

UPromise. In this program, every time you make an eligible purchase from certain stores or businesses, a percentage of that money is returned to you to help save and pay for college – all tax-free. For information: www.upromise.com



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